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EAST AND WEST SERIES

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TALKS ON EDUCATION

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BANARAS.

T. L. VASWANI

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FOREWORD

SURVEYING the situation in India, Beloved Dādā* had struck a note of warning, several years ago. Asked, if India was free, he had said :—"Not yet. Chaotic elements are growing : turbulance is increasing. Forces are astir which, I believe, will collide with governments.....India is in danger of losing what little she has achieved."

Not many of us realised, then, what lay in store for India,—the land of Rishis and Sages. Today, we find that violence is in the air in many parts of the country, and chaos is spreading like wild fire. Last week came the news of the savagery that was committed in the peaceful city of Bombay. For four days, several parts of the city were in the grip of senseless violence. Mob rule prevailed. Roads were barricaded. Buses were burnt. Railway and police stations were attacked and set on fire. Houses and shops were plundered. Properties worth crores of rupees were burnt or looted. Police were compelled to open fire many times : and a number of innocent citizens were killed or injured.

And all this during the year that is being celebrated as Mahatma Gandhi's birth-centenary year! Can anything be more sad?

Within the brief space of two decades, the face of India has changed. What is the cause? And what is the cure? The cause, as it seems to me, is this, that we have been torn from our roots. We need to go back to our roots.

How many of our educated men and women derive inspiration from the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, the *Gītā* and the *Upanishads?* How many of the thousands of graduates that are being sent out by our Universities, every year,

* Sri T. L. Vaswani

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know or appreciate the old songs and stories of India? How many realise the beauty of their own national culture? How many are in contact with the rich spiritual heritage of the race? Modern life, Beloved Dada says, "needs some of the beautiful old things our leaders and teachers loved, lived for, and died for in the long ago. Therefore I ask young men to claim their national culture, to claim the songs and stories, the literature and arts, the traditions and ideals of India. They are the temples where the soul of the race remembers itself. And in them still slumbers a sacred fire, waiting for young India to breathe into it the breath of reverent love, and wake it into a flame of sacrifice to the Saviour of the nations."

Yesterday, I sat in the midst of the little ones of St. Mira's English-medium School. Every morning, before beginning the day's work, the students meet together in the "Sanctuary" and start their work with worship. They sing Beloved Dada's soulful songs and Saint Mirā's moving *bhajans* : they chant *slokas* from the Bhagavad Gitā : they recite from the scriptures of the great religions of the world. And, yesterday, as I looked into their angelic faces, I said to myself :—"In them is the hope of the future. They,—and such as they, in different parts of the country,—can become the builders of a new India, the architects of a new humanity!"

And I realised why Beloved Dada, after taking active part, for some years, in the struggle for India's freedom, quietly slipped from the "vangaurd" and devoted his time and energies to "constructive" work. He opened *āshramas* : he started *Yuvak Sanghas* (Youth centres) : he founded schools and colleges inspired by ideals of new education.

"New India," he said, "will be built not in the Assembly Hall but in the School. Indian ideals should be impressed on students in the formative years of their lives.....

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Physical training, open-air institutions, social service, and the training of emotions should be regarded as important elements in our educational programme in addition to mind teaching and *Brahma-vidyā* or Science of the Spirit."

And again :—

"If our souls are meagre, today, it is because our education has lost touch with the great soul of nature and with great teachers. There is organisation, there is an elaborate machinery of education, today : but where is the soul? Our students are taught science and civics : but how many of them have the courage that would stand by truth, though 'the heavens fell'?.....

"If India stands true to her ancient ideals in education, she will enrich once more the world's life. The universities of Europe may, then, do homage to India's sages, and India once again may go upon her mission as a Guru of the great nations!"

Will India stand true to the ideals that made her great in the long ago? At a time, when darkness brooded over Western civilisation, India was strong and vital. And she was acclaimed as a leader of the nations, a builder of civilisation. Much has she suffered through the centuries. Great has been her agony. And, today, she lies prostrate and weak. But India is not defeated. And India will never defeated be, as long as her people cling to the vision of the sages who saw that the Root of life is God. Turning away from Him we but wander from distraction to distraction. Turn back to God! Love God and love your fellowmen! In love is the solution to all the problems which afflict modern civilisation. In love is the secret of the peace which men and nations alike are seeking.

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In the following pages have been brought together some of Beloved Dada's talks on education. Education was a subject very near and dear to Beloved Dada's heart. He turned not to politics but to culture, not to Lokasabhās and Assemblies but to schools and colleges for an awakening of the creative forces which may build up a new social order. He must have delivered hundreds of lectures and talks on education. Some day, perhaps, they will be brought together in one or more volumes. What a light they will throw on the true eudcational ideals and their relation to life in the development of civilisation!

True education, according to Beloved Dada, is meant to help us to fulfil our destiny, our duty, our mission, our *dharma*. We are here for some special purpose. Each one of us has a purpose to fulfil in the scheme of life. The purpose for which I am here is not the same as that for which you are here. And true education teaches us how best to fulfil this purpose. Therefore is education a science of life. And the true educator, the true teacher is not a mere school-master, a professor or a lecturer : the true teacher is a friend and a guide on the path of life. The true teacher is he who helps us to move out of darkness into light.

There is but one darkness,—that of selfish isolation. The truly educated man does not cut himself off from his fellow-men. Their sorrows are his sorrows : their joys are his joys. Such deep sense of identification with one's fellow-men some of us saw in the life of Beloved Dada. He did not merely sympathise with the poor and oppressed : he did not merely serve them. He entered into their hearts and became one with them. And, not unoften, we saw his large, luminous eyes touched with tears, as he listened to the tragic tales of some of those who came to him for help and relief.

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"There is no death," he taught us early one morning. "Death is an illusion. We must learn to transcend it." And in the course of the day he was called to the side of an old mother who had lost an only son in an air-crash. She wept bitter tears. And Beloved Dada's eyes were touched with tears. When, later, we said to him :—"Only this morning you taught us that death was an illusion. What, then, was the reason of your tears ?" he answered :—"When I sat by the side of the old mother, I felt *I* was the old mother!"

Was this, too, the reason why Jesus wept when he sat by the side of the sister of Lazarus?

Mahātmā Gāndhi, too, was filled with this sense of identification with the sufferings of others. One day, it is said, a group of "refugees" from Bahawalpur meets him. The dispossessed refugees relate to him their tales of agony and woe. And Mahatma Gandhi says in a voice tremulous with emotion :—"What right have I to live here in this mansion where I get all that I need, while these, my brothers, have no proper shelter in the cold of winter, and many of them do not get even two full meals a day? How I wished I could share what I have with them!"

In this "sharing" of what you have with others is the secret of true education. For the end of knowledge, Beloved Dada says, is service. Beloved Dada was never tired of quoting to us the *sloka* from the Gitā wherein the Lord says that they who cook food for themselves alone are thieves! "They who spread a feast for themselves alone," said Beloved Dada, again and again, "they, alas! eat sin and they drink of sin!"

To Beloved Dada there came, one day, a group of students, saying :—"You have written over five hundred books and booklets. We cannot read them all. And even if we did read them all, we would not be able to under-

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stand much of what you have written. Tell us, in a few simple words, what it is that you teach."

And Beloved Dada looked lovingly into the bright, intelligent faces of the students before him and said :—"Knowing by doing : this is what I teach. For knowledge without action is empty as a shadow. And the purest of actions, the noblest of deeds is that which you offer unto the Lord for the service of the poor and broken ones. Therefore, with one hand cling to the Lotus-feet of the Lord and with the other go and serve the poor and lowly!"

In these few simple words is enshrined the teaching given in the following pages :—"Knowing by doing. For knowledge without action is empty as a shadow. And the purest of actions, the noblest of deeds is that which you offer unto the Lord for the service of the poor and broken ones. Therefore, with one hand cling to the Lotus-feet of the Lord and with the other go and serve the poor and lowly!"

In this ideal is still the hope of a broken India, a bleeding humanity.

J. P. VASWANI

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AN ANCIENT UNIVERSITY*.

A UNIVERSITY should be a shrine of culture : and so I submit that a University of the true type should be dominated neither by "power-politics" nor by "theology." A University of the true type should aim at bringing scholars together on a platform of culture.

Men of culture are brothers all over the world. There must be no thought of the "Hindu" and no thought of the "Mussalman" in a shrine of culture.

We meet together, this evening, under the auspices of the "Gitā Class." The Gitā enshrines a noble ideal of culture, an ideal which inspired the great Universities of India in the long ago.

"Seek thou wisdom, O Arjuna!" says Sri Krishna to his devoted disciple. India's Universities had this ideal before them. Arjuna asks :—"What is wisdom?" And Sri Krishna says :—"Arjuna! wisdom is conquest." The ideal of the university life in ancient India was :—Live heroically. True wisdom is conquest. True wisdom is for them who would be heroes in the field of life.

And Arjuna asks the question :—"Master! I wish to understand how wisdom is conquest." And Sri Krishna says :—"My child! this conquest is the conquering of desires, conquering of *trishnā*."

There is a conflict between "desire" and "protest." I am attracted by a particular object: I desire to possess it. And a protest rises within me :—"Do not gratify your desire!" When there is conflict between "desire" and "protest," I go through a number of experiences. Do I

* Being notes of an address delivered by Beloved Dada [Sri T. L. Vaswani] to the Gita Class, Karachi.

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satisfy my desire? I suffer, again and again, until there dawns upon me the idea that I must keep clear of this pleasure, for after pleasure cometh pain. I begin to understand that in pleasure is the seed of pain. So there is the evolution of my consciousness : so there is the building up of my moral muscles and so wisdom comes to me at last that I must conquer desires.

Arjuna asks :—"Master! tell me how desires may be conquered." And Sri Krishna says :—"My child! in order to conquer desires, you must take care of the instruments of the *Ātman*."

The *Ātman* has entered the field of evolution here, and the *Ātman* functions through instruments. "What are they?" asks Arjuna. And the Master says :—Listen! The first instrument is the physical body, the *sthula sarira*. Take care of the body : keep the body pure and keep the body strong. The eyes, the ears, all the *indriyas* (senses), must be kept pure. Another instrument is the inner body, the subtle body, the *sukhshama sarira*,—the body of desires (*trishnā*), the body of emotions. Desire, *trishnā*, must be kept under control. There is yet another body, the mind, the *manas*. The mind is as a monkey : the mind wanders hither and thither. The mind must learn concentration. Arjuna! learn to control the monkey-mind. Then there is the fourth instrument of the *Ātman* : it is the *buddhi*, will-power. Arjuna! build up your will-power aright. See that your will is strong and pure.

The world's piteous need, today, is of men who have not only strong wills but pure wills,—wills dedicated to the service of humanity, *lokasangraha*, the welfare of the people.

When these "instruments" are well-trained, the *jiva* attains, gradually, to what the Gita calls "*Brahma Nirvāna*," the peace that passeth understanding. An artist has painted a picture of a roaring waterfall descending, and

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near the waterfall is a tree on which a bird is singing. The "roaring waterfall" is the world : and near it is the "tree" of wisdom on which the bird, *jiva*, is singing, serving humanity with peace in his heart (*chitta-shānti*).

This ideal of "heroic living" was emphasised in the *āshramas* of India. Over and over again, Sri Krishna says to Arjuna :—"Be a hero in the fight! Live heroically." And in the culture-centres and the Universities of ancient India this teaching was given to students :—"Live heroically! Learn self-control! Restrain your desires! Be pure! Be creative!"

CONCERNING one of these Universities I propose to speak a few words, today, and more when I meet you on Sunday next. There were universities built in Kurukshetra, in Kāshi, in Nadiā,—great universities! But the University I speak of, today, was built in Bihār,—the great Nālandā University. It taught ten thousand students. According to some, the number of students was, at one time, twelve thousand. The Nalanda University was built in the first century of the Christian era. It continued to function for several centuries until, in the seventh century, there broke in upon India a storm, the storm of a foreign invasion, and the University fell, overwhelmed by the storm. India had not the strength to resist the storm, India had not a *kshatrya* race to guard her : the *kshatrya* race had practically perished.

With what devotion was this University built,—built by great merchants and built by kings! The kings realised that while they were to help, their governments must not interfere with the course of culture. Six kings helped the University. And the first of them was a lover of the poor : he served the orphan and the widow : he served the poor people, and he had reverence for men of knowledge.

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Did you ever ask yourself the question :—"What is the meaning of the word, Nalanda?" The word means, "service without intermission," "uninterrupted service," "unbroken *sevā*." What a noble ideal is enshrined in the very word,—Nalanda!

The Nalanda University had a number of able teachers, professors of learning,—all scholars who were men of character. Look around you, today! Survey the situation in India! Think for a moment what our schools and colleges are striving for! Mere degrees! And my bewildered heart asks the question :—Where is character-building? My broken, beloved India stands urgently in need of men of character, heroic men, pure men, sacrificial men, men who would pour their lives as an offering in the great *yagna* of humanity.

The head of the Nalanda University was Shil Bhadra. He was a very learned man. He had wandered to different parts of India and, after many wanderings, had come to Nalanda. It was open to Shil Bhadra to be a Rājā in East Bengal : but he realised that wisdom was richer than rubies, richer than silver and gold. And Shil Bhadra moved on in quest of knowledge until, at last, he came to Nālandā and there, one day, became the President of the great University.

The Chinese scholar, Hsuen Tsāng, comes to Nālandā and in reverence bows down to Shil Bhadra. Then there takes place a conversation between Shil Bhadra and the Chinese scholar. In the course of his talk, the Chinese scholar says to Shil Bhadra :—"I have left China and have wandered in many parts of India. I am in quest of knowledge. Tell me, master, what is knowledge?"

Shil Bhadra was not only a great scholar : he was a saint, a man of pure life, of developed intuitions, a man of awakened *buddhi*, a man of wondrous will-power, a man filled with the true spirit of *sevā*, service of humanity. Shil

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Bhadra says to him :—"My child, knowledge is perception of the principles or laws of life!"

Here is a *sutra* which some of you may treasure in your hearts. Knowledge is not babbling from books. Knowledge is not what you read in a parchment, a withered leaf. Knowledge is perception of the principles or laws of life.

Such men of knowledge are the piteous need of India in these agitated days,—men of knowledge, men of perception, men of developed intuitions, men who can see afar and can guide us aright.

What are the principles of knowledge? Five. And these are :—(1) the principle of fellowship; (2) the principle of reverence; (3) the principle of concentration or *dhyāna*; (4) the principle of tolerance; and (5) the principle of compassion, sympathy, *sevā* and *yagna*, service and sacrifice.

Do you wish to build universities in India? Then understand a little of the great legacy which is yours as children of India, as children of this ancient land. Great is your heritage : great is your inheritance.

The culture of ancient Greece and Rome gave a new awakening to the life of Europe. The ancient culture of Asia, the ancient culture of India,will awake the whole world to a new life. But where are they who would make a study of the ancient culture of the East, of the ancient culture of India? Where are the eager students of the Gita? Where are they who would understand and assimilate, in daily life, the wisdom which Sri Krishna spoke on the Kurukshetra, five thousand years ago?

Do not merely read the Gita : *live* the Gita, everyday! Live the Gita and grow in a spirt of fellowship, service and tolerence. Grow! Grow! Grow! Be expansive! Grow in the spirit of compassion, service and sacrifice!

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THE SPIRIT OF EDUCATION*

LET me speak a word or two of greetings to you all, and of gratitude, on my part, to you all, friends of the Mirā Movement! And let me say how grateful I feel to Āchārya Karve for having so kindly consented to be our president. He has much to give us. He has beautiful love in his heart. I am happy he assures us of his blessings. The benedictions of the Āchārya are a rich treasure to us all. And his words,—the words of a sage and a brother, the words of a sage and a friend,—are to me as the fresh waters of a spring. I feel grateful to him.

Acharya Karve is one of the few really great men of Maharāshtra who run away from greatness. And I recall the words of Carlyle :—"True greatness is unconscious." He is so simple, so modest, so humble. Simplicity, indeed, is a mark of the great ones of Maharāshtra, of her saints and sages, and their words of uplift and inspiration.

I feel grateful, also, to you, representatives of the Sindhi Community. You are here come together in a spirit of fellowship. May it grow from more to more! We are come together in the service of education. A sacred cause! May we, under Acharya's leadership, bring the seed we are about to sow,—the seed of Mira education,—may we bring the seed to flower and fruit.

Education of the right type is three-fold :—

(1) Education is a study of historical experience.

(2) Education is a study of contemporary life.

And (3) education is concerned with an application of

*Being notes of an address delivered by Beloved Dādā [Sri T. L. Vaswani] on the occasion of the inaugaration of St. Mira's School, in Poona, in 1950,—Maharishi D. K. Karve presiding.

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these studies to the training of the individual for the service of the common whole.

So, firstly, study what history has to teach us. History tells us of this ancient land, our beloved India. The history of Hindusthān, stretching over many, many centuries, has much to teach us. The history, too, of other nations needs to be studied. The historical experience of the ages must be assimilated.

But, secondly, we must make a study, also, of contemporary living. For the modern world has much to teach us. If, for a study of spiritual ideals, we turn to the holy sages of India, we must not forget that we live in the modern world of scientific and technical developments : and so the student of education must study at once the ancient Wisdom and modern Science. Yet mere study will not do.

The third purpose of right education is the application of these studies to the training of the individual. The student must be trained in the light of these experiences of history and the experiences of contemporary life. The pupil must be trained in order that he may become an instrument of service to others. Let him not study in order to gather gold or make money for his or her comforts. Let the pupil be taught that all the experiences of the past and all the endeavours of the present are to make the student a servant of society, a servant of India, a servant of humanity.

And so I said the third purpose of education is the application of these studies to the training of the individual for the service of the common whole, the service of society, the service of humanity.

One more thought I wish to place before you. Threefold is the purpose of education,—yes. And five factors enter into the making of education. I hope the teachers of the Mira Schools will keep in view these five factors.

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The first factor is respect for the child. Let the teachers respect their pupils. These little ones,—who are they? I believe the twentieth century will be, in an ever-increasing measure, a century of child-education. Who are these children?

I have, over and over again, looked into the eyes of the little ones. Their eyes shine with wonder. A spiritual light is in the eyes of these little ones. They are angels come from an unseen world. A strange light is in their eyes : a strange joy is in their movements. You and I have not a little to learn from them. Every child has not a little to teach the teacher. In a spirit of humility, then, let every teacher take up the problem of teaching the pupils. I recall the words of a great seer who was, also, a great teacher,—Emerson. He said :—"The secret of a school lies in respecting the pupil." Angels move in the school-room : and so may the school become a centre of creative power.

And the second factor in education is reverence for the universe, reverence for nature. Every child should be given opportunities to come in contact with nature. So, in ancient India, the Rishis built *āshramas* in beautiful spots and the pupils beheld the wonder and beauty of nature.

The third factor in education is reverence for oneself. Let every pupil be taught to respect his or her body. The body is a temple of the Lord. Let every student move in an atmosphere of purity. To every pupil I say :—"Control your body, control your *sthula sarira*, control your thoughts, control your feelings, the impulsions of the heart!" Self-control is the secret of true discipline. Much is being talked, today, of discipline. True discipline is not the discipline imposed by an external authority. True discipline is self-control.

And the fourth factor which enters into the making of right education is reverence for humanity. So I wish that

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in every Mira centre and in every school and in every college, the days of the great ones of humanity be celebrated,—the great poets, the great sages, the great saints, the great seers, the great scientists of humanity.

And the fifth important factor which goes into the making of education is *sevā*,—the spirit of service. Teach your children to grow in the spirit of service. Students should be so trained that, in the maturity of their manhood, they may serve India. India needs such men, men like Āchārya Karve,—simple, humble, modest, reverent, pure. And India needs women like Mirā. In her was culture blended with devotion. Such men and such women will re-build society.

In the 12th century, in far off Baghdād, lived and taught a great Muslim, named al-Ghazāli. He was a *tapasvi*, a man of self-control and meditation : and these were blended with learning. Al-Ghazāli was a man of scholarship and meditation. He was a mystic of God. One of the books he wrote has a very curious title. The name of this book is, *O Child!* In this book, I read the following significant words :—"Know, my child! that knowledge without action is insanity : and the noblest action is service. So turn to the Face of God and share your goods with the poor!"

There is no nobler note which the theory or practice of education may sound than this :—"Turn to the Face of God and share your goods with the poor!"

May this teaching go forth from Mira centres to Poona, to the Maharāshtra, to the youths of India, to the waiting millions of humanity :—"Turn to the Face of God and share your goods with the poor!"

And may the blessings of God shine and shine and shine upon you for ever and ever more!

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WITNESS OF THE WEST*

It is interesting to note that some of the ideas in education emphasised by the Hindu Rishis and developed in the *āshramas* of old have been supported by some of the thinkers and educationists of the West.

Socrates created a revolution in Athenian society. A "martyr," literally, is a "witness." Socrates drank the cup of hemlock in witness to truth. The path of truth is covered with flames. Socrates was an inspired teacher of the youths of Athens : Socrates condemned the Sophists for charging "fees" for education. To Socrates, as to the Hindu Rishis, education was a thing of the Spirit,—a spiritual pursuit. And Socrates emphasised in his teaching the truth :—"Know thyself." It is the very heart of the wisdom of the Rishis.

Thinking of the *āshramas* of the Rishis, I have, sometimes, thought of the educational experiment of Thring. That eminent educationist of England opened a modest little school in a modest building. He was a pioneer and was not daunted by difficulties. He built up his school, stage by stage. There came a day when his "Grammar School" was regarded as in no way inferior to the great Public Schools of England. Thring's new experiment in education succeeded wonderfully well. An important principle of Thring's experiment was respect for students. In the *āshramas* of old, the Rishi-teacher called his pupils, the *brahmachārins*, "sons of the *kula*, children of the one spiritual family." In the Rishi-system of education, respect for the student was beautifully blended with love.

* Being excerpts from an address delivered by Beloved Dādā [Sri T. L. Vaswani] at Colombo (Ceylon).

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I think, too, of Henri Fabre of France, the eminent scientist. His ten volumes on "Insects" made him famous. He took a prominent part in the movement for the secondary education for girls. He held liberal views and provoked the wrath of the people who held reactionary views. How liberal was the ancient Rishi! How conservative is the modern Hindu! Fabre was denounced as a "dangerous peasant."

Fabre was born very poor : genius is, again and again, born in a cottage. And he rose, in due course, to occupy the chair of Physics at Avignon. In his system of education, he emphasised the value of "excursions," or "rambles." Such "excursions," brought students in touch with nature. And the *āshramas* of the Rishis, the education-centres of India, were built in beautiful nature-spots.

Fabre was, like the Rishis, a lover of nature and he taught,—showing in his life the beauty of his teaching,—that life was enriched through love of little insects. The *brahmachārins* in the *āshramas* of old loved the birds and fed them. Fabre's life and teaching were a witness to that *dayā dharma* which is the message of India's sages through the ages. Darwin rightly called Fabre "the incomparable observer." Fabre observed in sympathy little insects, the beetles and ants. In one of his books, Fabre spoke of the "courtship of the scorpions."

Observe and love the little ones,—said Fabre. And teachers in the school would feel the joy of their work, if they would observe and love the little ones in their charge.

Fabre, like the Rishis, had burning faith in God. It was with him not a lip-belief. In a beautiful passage, he says :—"I cannot say I believe in God : I see Him. Without Him I understand nothing. Without Him all is darkness. I regard atheism as a mania. It is a malady of the age. You could take my skin from me more easily than

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my faith in God."

The words have the ring of the Upanishads. *Sutra* after *sutra* in these ancient inspired books of the Rishis sings of the *Ātman*, the Spirit, as the Great Reality, the Life of all life. And I believe profoundly that a teacher, inspired by fervent faith in God, can do much to draw out the hidden power of the pupils.

Another eminent witness of the West is Dr. Montessori. There is no time to tell the fascinating story of how this Italian doctor of medicine took to education. Her studies in biology and physiology helped her in her educational work. Her experiments with children from asylums and "deficient" children succeeded and spread the Montessori Movement in Europe and America.

The basis of the Montessori Movement is faith in the life-force and individual power of the student. This faith shaped the *āshramas* of old : this faith inspired the teaching of the *Rishikulas* and *Gurukulas* in ancient India. The modern schools in India are not modern enough : they lack the Rishi's vision in education. The schools in India need the inspiration of this idea,—faith in the life-force of the student.

There is a hidden *shakti*, a life-force in every pupil. And it cannot be drawn out by repression or fear. The life energy of the student can only be evoked by sympathy and love. Environment is an important factor in the development of the child. The German word, "Kindergarten," is from the words, "*kinder*" (child) and "*garten*" (garden). Every school should be situated in a lovely spot of nature. In this faith were the *āshramas* built. Every *āshrama* was a garden of nature.

There is yet another point in regard to which Dr. Montessori's teaching recalls the wisdom of the Rishis. She emphasises the spiritual life of the child. It is a matter

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of deep regret that, in India, the world's ancestral home of spiritual consciousness, the spiritual life of the student has been long suppressed. Where are the schools which nourish their students in an atmosphere charged with spiritual vibrations?

An increasing number of Indian youths speak of "atheism" in the name of "science." Not so speak some of the highly educated devotees of modern science. To Einstein and Eddington, Sir James Jeans and Sir Oliver Lodge, science is not anti-religious. Science, deeply studied, is seen to be a revelation of the Spirit: and nature is a witness to the presence of a "Mathematical Thinker" of the Universe. Both science and religion are spiritual constructions,—science on the phenomenal side of nature, religion on the other side of ideals and aspirations. Both science and religion are studies in a progressive experience which suggests the Infinite.

There is a Spirit in and beyond the stars. A school without spiritual contacts is an absurdity.

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THE TEACHER IS A FRIEND*

THE Mira English-medium School celebrates its Annual Day, today. As I am unable to be present at the Function, I hasten to send a few words of greetings and good wishes.

There is, I believe, no joy so true and so heartening as to be in the midst of the little ones to receive their blessings and to listen to their little words which enshrine, on many occasions, the wisdom of the heart.

On the very front page of your "programme" I read the words which, to me, are so true, I feel, I can add nothing better. How significant are the words :—

Behold the beauty of New Dawn!
It calls you to a vision new,
It calls you to the simple, true!
Beneath St. Mira's Flag march on!

I wished I could speak to you in the simple, lyrical Marathi language,—the language in which sang the great poet-saint of the Mahārashtra, St. Tukāram. He gave the message of true, indispensable simplicity and self-reliance. And this I would re-word to you in my broken words. I wish the students of the School to grow in simplicity and self-reliance and not be lost in conceit and arrogance. True education must never forget this great ideal. For the secret of true education is reverence.

In a pretty, little story which I read, sometime ago, we are told of a man who goes, from place to place, in search of *swarga-loka*, the heaven-world. After many weary

* Being Beloved Dada's Message to St. Mira's English-Medium School on the occasion of its Annual Function.

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wanderings, he finds himself standing at the gate which does not open to him. But he sees there is a gate-keeper who asks :—"Who are you?"

"A teacher," is the answer.

"Please stay here for a few minutes while I go in to report."

He comes back with the words :—"The Master says there is no place for teachers in the heaven-world!"

It is true not a few teachers are vain and proud. They parade their little learning. There is no place in the *swarga-loka* for those who are vain and proud.

The teacher, sad at heart, wishes to wend his way back to the earth. A voice then whispers in his ears :—"O teacher! the dust of dead words clings to thee! Wash thyself of this dust with the waters of silence."

And the teacher sits for sometime in silence, in meditation, when he hears the words :—"The teacher is a friend!"

The noble aspiration of a true teacher is :—"May I be a friend of all,—friend of brother teachers, friend of all pupils, friend of all races and communities, friend of all nations, of all men and birds and beasts, friend of God's creation!"

When this aspiration awakes in him, when he says out of the fullness of the heart, "May I be a friend of teachers and pupils, a friend of the poor and needy, of all communities and countries, of all who suffer and are in pain," the portals of paradise, we are told, are opened to him, and the angels greet him, saying :—"Blessed among the mortals are you ! Enter in, and behold the Master !"

Friendship,—is the essence of true education. The teacher is a true friend of his pupils,—friend and guide, friend and, therefore, a true director. This significant thought is uttered by Plato in one of his "Dialogues," when he says that the secret of education is friendship. Is not the same thought expressed in the Gita in the words :—

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Shraddhāvān labhate gnānam? He who has *shraddhā*,—he receives knowledge or wisdom. *Shraddhā* is reverence which includes humility and friendship.

A true friend is he in whose heart is love enshrined. He is a friend of the poor and needy, a friend of all who suffer in this world of tragedy and pain. I believe if the Mira School sends out into this broken, bleeding world some, equipped with knowledge and sympathy for the help and healing of all who suffer and are in pain, the Mira Institutions will have fulfilled the highest purpose of their existence, and they will be true to the teaching of the great saint whose name they bear and whose inspiration they wish to pass on to others as a torchlight of Truth and Wisdom in the difficult world of tomorrow.

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FRUITS OF MIS-EDUCATION

In a small place in Sind, in a quiet hour, I made a vow that a school should open, dedicated to God and the saints and the service of humanity. This humble offering is now known as St. Mira's School. I know not in how many souls and hearts this School has wrought changes.

At a time, when wrong notions of freedom and Indian destiny were being propagated, this School raised its voice to teach the truth which, I believe, needs to be published, far and wide, throughout the length and breadth of India,—that life's joy is in acceptance of duty. *Dharma* is the word rightly emphasised in the teaching of the Mira Movement. In accepting your duty and living up to it, you will attain to true peace and happiness. Do thy duty and thou wilt attain to that true happiness which the nations have sought in vain in power and greatness and glory.

Duty or *dharma* is an essential element in the discipline which is emphasised in the teaching of Mira Schools. In discipline of the right type may broken India be re-built. For lack of this, current education has proved impotent.

"What is the malady of modern education?" They asked me. And I said :—"Dissociation." There is (1) dissociation of the heart and the mind. We cultivate the mind and turn away from the heart. So, many of us become cruel. When the mind is dissociated from the heart, selfishness takes hold of consciousness. (2) Dissociation of the heart and the senses. The senses receive a call of the heart,—a spiritual call. When this call is trampled upon, the senses revel in lust. One truth, over and over again, taught to our pupils is the truth of *brahmacharya*. In the *āshramas*, of old, when India was truly great,

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the teacher taught :—"Control your senses !" Let them not run after *bhoga*, enjoyment. Let the senses listen to the still, small voice of the heart and be purified. Blessed is the student who has this mark of purification : then, indeed, he becomes strong and has the equipment to face dangers and difficulties. Without *brahmacharya*, education ends in sterility and despair.

Mis-education glorifies the ego. When egoism grows, you become blind to the claims and rights of others. Egoism, thus, is cruelty. And, may I not add, egoism is, also, cowardice? Egoism is spiritual poverty. Let me add, egoism is, also, avarice. The egoist lusteth after the things of the earth and does not hesitate to trample upon the claims of others. Egoism, too, if you will look into the matter deeply, has a relish, a taste, a liking for the sordid, the unbeautiful, the undivine. Egoism is rebellion of the little self against the Spirit. Egoism is, essentially, the sin of disobedience.

Mis-education misses the call of the true ethical or moral life, whose central word is obedience or acceptance of *dharma*. The more I think of it, the more it seems to me that many of our schools suffer from the malady of mis-education. So, they infect the heart,—which is the seat of love. Is it not true that the hearts of many of the educated people are infected, dried? Passion takes the place of true affection or love in the lives of such people.

The mind, too, is affected by mis-education. The mind thinks only of the utilities of life. The mind was meant to weigh and measure. Instead, the mind, infected with mis-education, learns to twist, and so, reason is rendered impotent to deal with reality.

The will, too, is gradually rendered weak. The will rots and loses its strength of purpose and its concentration of the supreme values of life.

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Step by step, doth man degenerate thus, until the true man,—that whom we call the *Ātman*—is reduced to a state of hopelessness. Man drifts at last on a shoreless sea. In this state of consciousness man knows not whither he goes, and he begins to feel that his life has no aim, no purpose. An incurable pessimism sets in : hope, the eternal message of the soul, gradually vanishes. This state the *Gitā* refers to as *vināshanam*, destruction of true consciousness. It is disintegration.

Am I wrong if I say that much of current education is disintegration of the true personality of man? Look at the youths of today! They seem to say :—"The May and morning of our life is gone, the glory and grace of our youth hath passed away. Life for us has lost its meaning and its value." In the depths of doubt and despair youths wander.

One aim of St. Mira's education is to lift the youths out of these depths in which life seems so dark. The Mira education aims at awakening consciousness to light, to joy. "Hitch your wagon to the star!" is the call of St. Mira's Schools to their students. Youth is hope, not despair. And if our beloved but broken India is to be re-built, it needs, in different parts, youths full of hope and faith and courage to lay a spiritual foundation of a new nation. The heart and the will and the mind and the senses must all be purified, so that the whole man, the *Ātman*, is restored to a state of hopefulness and strength. Education of the true type has in view the health and happiness of the whole man.

When the whole man is purified, is strengthened, enriched and illuminated, the possibility appears of doing true service and laying the foundation of a new Indian nation. Young men, impregnated with a spirit of new education, are India's need in every part of this ancient land. They will teach the rich to do penance for their neglect of the poor and their

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pride in material possessions. Such youths will make an oblation of themselves on the altar of the Lord. Such youths, carrying far and wide the message of the Master,—the message of duty, which alone may reveal the contents of true freedom,—will move, from place to place, and show forth to the poor and weak the Lord of Eternal strength, and say to them :—"Behold your Master! He came, in the long ago, in strength and power, and He is, today, with you in seeming weakness, in poverty and pain, to serve you. For, He is the Lord of the poor and weak!"

Education of the true type is dedication, is self-offering. And everyday the aspiration grows in my heart that in this spirit of dedication the Mira Schools may grow from more to more. I see around me, every day, so many of my brothers and sisters, hungry, crying for bread, hungry and in pain, crying for relief, hungry and weak, asking for strength. Who will give them the bread they need, the strength they cry for? Who will show them that though the world lies broken, there is at work a power that makes for righteousness, for justice, for peace, for freedom and for the beauty that shines from star to star and calleth us, of this earth-plane, to despair not?

So many of the modern era, like Spengler, are at best prophets of doom. India's Rishis and saints have, again again, sounded the note of joy and strength. Ye are not weak, young men of India! In you are asleep possibilities which have but to wake up to make India a nation of the truly free. "Awake! Awake!" This is the word which sings, again and again, in Mira's songs. And this is the one note in the message of St. Mira's Schools.

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AWAKENING OF THE HEART*

I AM asked to speak a few words to you. I thank you all for so kindly calling me here. I wish I had opportunities to meet you oftener. To meet together is to understand :: and to understand is to love. If not teachers only but teachers and students of the Mira School could meet together, from time to time, they would understand one another better. And out of that understanding will grow the power of love, which may build the School on right lines.

As I told you yesterday, my thoughts have moved out, again and again, to a teacher of my early youth,—Sadhu Hirānand. He taught us in sympathy : and sympathy understood us, and he went into our hearts. He loved us :: he had an engaging smile : his eyes were luminous with the light of love. In his teaching to us, there was a beautiful blend of information with inspiration. And this, I think, is what every teacher should aim at,—the blending of knowledge with love.

I think of another who was, at one time, a teacher in an American University,—President Wilson. Wilson was, at one time, a teacher in Princeton University. It was after years of teaching in that great University that he was called to be the President of the United States of America. He became a world figure. And, on one occasion, he spoke the following significant words :—"The heart of the world is awake; and the heart must be satisfied." Let me slightly modify the words of that great teacher to indicate the essence of what my teacher,—Sadhu Hiranand,

* From an Address delivered by Beloved Dada [Sri T. L. Vaswani] to teachers of St. Mira's School on the occasion of Sadhu Hiranand's Birthday.

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—taught me :—"The heart of the world is awakening : the heart must be inspired."

The heart has not yet awakened : the heart has begun to awake. The heart has not yet awakened, or there would not be threats of another world-war. The heart has not yet awakened, or there would not be selfish struggle for power. The heart has not awakened, or our village-folk would not be ill-clothed, ill-fed. The heart of humanity has not yet awakened, or they would not think of bombs and poisonous gases and weapons of destructive wars. But, I believe, the heart of humanity lives in our schools.

If India lives in our villages, remember, the heart of India beats in the little ones. Hence the great task before you, teachers of the Mira School! Your task and your burden are, also, your great opportunity to train the little ones. Train them in the spirit of sympathy and love. Blend information with inspiration. Blend knowledge with love. Remember, the coming world,—the world to be, the world of tomorrow,—will be a world of sympathy radiant with the light of love!

I thank you again for your kindness in calling me here. And may the benedictions of the Spirit of Love shine upon you and the Mira School! And may you, banded together in the spirit of sympathy and understanding, in the true spirit of knowledge and love,—may you build the Mira School,—in the spirit which inspired the work of my early teacher,—Sadhu Hiranand. Not "fame," but "service" was his watch-word. Blessed be his name!

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THE INSPIRED PLOUGHMAN*

A RISHI arrives in an *āshrama* : they ask him to speak. At this moment a bird outside begins to sing. There is silence for some moments until the bird has ceased to sing. Then the Rishi says :—"My talk has already been told : the bird has sung what I had to say!"

And you of St. Mira's High School,—St. Mira's little birds,—you have, in your beautiful, little song, sung the very heart of my message to you, today. You have sung of *sevā*, service. Education is service.

What is *sevā*, service?

In the 14th century, Langland wrote his poem named "Piers Ploughman." Langland was a farmer's son. He was very poor, and his whole heart went out in sympathy and love to the poor,—in cottages and in prisons. He saw men making pilgrimages. "Seek Saint Truth," he said, "and make pilgrimages to the sick and the poor." "The learned," he said, "talk of God....The poor, common people pierce with prayer the Palace of Heaven!"

In this poem, Langland speaks of Piers, who is a farmer, a ploughman, coming in humble guise and moving, from place to place, to sing his message.

What is the message of Piers, the Ploughman? He says :—

(1) "Serve the country not by cries and clamour but by silent work." We have, for a long time, confounded work with noise. We have cried and clamoured. We have spent our strength in tumult and shouts. True strength is in silent work!

* From one of Beloved Dada's talks to students in the "Sanctuary" of St. Mira's School.

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(2) Piers the Ploughman, the Prophet of the poor, further says :—"There is some work for every body." Don't be talkative. Never think a nation was built in speeches. Work! Work!

(3) Piers the Ploughman further says :—"Work in your homes." Let every girl help her mother in her home work. Let not girls fight shy of the kitchen. In the great Colleges of America, the girls,—some of them daughters of multi-millionaires,—feel proud to work in the kitchen of their homes.

(4) We are further asked to work for the "sick and poor in humble cottages."

(5) Lastly, the inspired Ploughman says :—"Let each man mend his own life!"

Don't interfere with others! *Seva* is not interference. A true servant realises that he must mend his own life. Build ye your own lives, children of St. Mira, and in silent ways serve your homes and the sick and the poor. And in this quiet service,—not in shouts and noises,—find the joy of life!

There is holier music in silent service of the poor and lowly than in all the gorgeous chanting of temple priests.

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I, P. H. Ramchandani, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

P. H. RAMCHANDANI

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NEWS AND NOTES

By A "Pilgrim"

Dādā Yagna :—Beloved Dādā's *Yagna* was observed with deep devotion and enthusiasm on Feb. 12 with a three-days' programme (Feb. 10–12). On Feb. 12, hundreds of poor people were fed and grapes were distributed among them. At the evening Fellowship Meeting, Beloved Dada, speaking in his soft, flute-like voice, said :—"Life is a gift. But it must be accepted in courage and humility. None but the brave receive and rejoice. None but the meek do life's rich gift seek. Be full of faith and strength, and each day pray :—'Out of Thy abundance Thou art giving me, Lord! And I open out my soul to receive, ever-increasingly, the Good, the Pure, the Beautiful,—the Ever-Bountiful!'"

Dādā Yagna will be celebrated again on March 14.

Shri Meher Bābā :—Sudden came the news that Shri Meher Bābā had "dropped" his body on Jan. 31. On receipt of the news, Sri J. P. Vaswani sent the following telegram to Shri Adi K. Irani :—"The lamp is gone. The Light of Love he kindled in our hearts is deathless. Beloved Baba is deathless. He lives in the Life Eternal. My loving prayers are with you all dear ones of the *Bābā-mandali*."

Thousands of devotees from all over India came to Ahmednagar for the last *darshana* : and the sacred body was kept for a week before it was interred in the *samādhi* which had been built for the purpose during the life-time of Shri Meher Baba.

Shri Meher Baba's 75th Jayanti fell on the 25th of February. The Poona Meher Baba Centre celebrated it with a seven days' programme. In a letter to Shri Ramakrishnan, the Secretary of the Centre, Sri J. P. Vaswani wrote :

Your kind invitation folder has just reached me.....
I love to think of Beloved Baba as still by us, with us,

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within us, pouring upon us the love of his great mother-heart. I believe this is your experience, too,—as, also, of several other Baba lovers.

"I have come not to teach but to awaken," said Beloved Baba. And he awakened through the power of love. "Love me absolutely," he said, again and again. He tried to create an emotional culture in which all thoughts of division and all feelings of separation would be overcome by love.

"And what is love?" I asked Beloved Dādā once. And he answered :—"This is love that you account yourself as nothing and God as all!"

In this "nothingness" is the secret of the life of surrender to which I aspire.

H. H. Sant Kirpāl Singh :—The 75th birthday of His Holiness Sant Kirpāl Singhji Maharāj, Founder of the Ruhāni Satsang, Delhi, and President of the World Fellowship of Religions, was celebrated on Feb. 6, at Delhi. An *Abhinandan Patra* was presented to him on Feb. 7, by Kaka Saheb Kalelkar.

At the evening Fellowship Meeting (*Satsang*) held in the Mira Hall, Poona, on Feb. 6, tributes were paid by Sri Gangaram Sajandas and Sri J. P. Vaswani to this man of God. His association with Beloved Dada was recalled.

In a message sent, for the occasion, Sri J. P. Vaswani wrote :—"Sant Kirpāl Singh is the very picture of humility and love and renunciation.....Wonderful is his humility. Honours have been heaped upon him. Titles have come to him, unasked. Many in many parts of the world revere him as a Guru. He has retained the simplicity and humility and naturalness of a child."

Annual Function :—The Annual Function of St. Mira's English-medium School was held on Feb. 9. Dr. P. V. Cherian, Governor of Maharashtra, presided and Smt. Tara Cherian gave away the prizes. In their brief, beautiful speeches both Dr. and Smt. Cherian paid glowing tributes to Beloved Dada and his educational work. In such institutions, they said, is the hope of India and Humanity.

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